

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 IO-13 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 EB-08
AID-05 ARA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2127
INFO AMEMBASSY COTONOU
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
AMEMBASSY KIGALI
AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE
AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY BANGUI
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY BISSAU
AMEMBASSY PRAIA
AMEMBASSY VICTORIA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY LOME

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 16735

E.O. 11652: GDS
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SUBJECT: THE FRANCOPHONE AFRICAN SUMMIT: IMPRESSIONS
OF FRENCH OFFICIALS

REF: A) PARIS 16442, B) PARIS 16515

1. SINCE THE CONCLUSION OF THE FRANCOPHONE AFRICAN
SUMMIT THE EVENING OF MAY 23 WE HAVE DISCUSSED THE

CONFERENCE WITH SEVERAL RESPONSIBLE QUAI OFFICIALS AND A SENIOR ELYSEE ADVISOR. THE FOLLOWING IS AN AMALGAM OF THEIR IMPRESSIONS. THE CONFERENCE WAS A SUCCESS LARGELY IN THAT IT TOOK PLACE AND REINFORCED THE TRADITION OF COOPERATION BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE COUNTRIES OF FRANCOPHONE AFRICA. IT WAS ALSO A USEFUL OCCASION FOR AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS IN INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS AND IN BILATERAL MEETINGS BETWEEN CHIEFS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT. OTHER THAN IN THIS LIMITED SENSE THE SUMMIT ACCOMPLISHED LITTLE.

2. THE CONFERENCE AGENDA CALLED FOR DISCUSSION OF LARGELY ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT MATTERS. THIS REFLECTED BASIC CONCERNS OF THE GATHERED AFRICAN LEADERS BUT MOST WERE NOT PERSONALLY MUCH INTERESTED IN THE LARGELY TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEMS ADDRESSED. AND, MOREOVER, THEY WERE DISTRACTED BY THE SHABA EVENTS. THE MEETINGS WERE GIVEN A SENSE OF UNREALITY BY THE FACT THAT SECURITY QUESTIONS WERE NEVER BROACHED DURING THE FORMAL CONFERENCE SESSIONS. OF THE ASSEMBLED LEADERS A HALF DOZEN OR SO, MOST NOTABLY SENGHOR, HOUPHOUET BOIGNY AND BONGO, SHARED THE FRENCH CONCERN ABOUT SOVIET ENCROACHMENTS AND DESTABILIZATION IN AFRICA AND WERE NOT SHY ABOUT SPEAKING UP. ABOUT AN EQUAL NUMBER OF LEADERS OF OTHER COUNTRIES, INCLUDING NIGER AND TO SOME EXTENT MALI, FELT MUCH THE CONFIDENTIAL

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SAME BUT WERE LARGELY SILENT. THE REST OF THE PARTICIPANTS WERE INTERESTED BUT NONCOMMITTAL OR IN SOME CASES OPPOSED TO FRENCH INTERVENTION ON THE CONTINENT. THOSE OPPOSED KEPT THEIR OWN COUNSEL.

3. THE REPORTED DECISION TO STUDY THE FORMATION OF AN AFRICAN MILITARY FORCE TO INTERVENE TO HELP COUNTRIES WHICH ARE THE TARGETS OF AGGRESSION WAS NOT TAKEN BY THE CONFERENCE AS A WHOLE BUT BY A LIMITED GROUP OF COUNTRIES MOST SYMPATHETIC TO THE FRENCH POSITION. THE CONCEPT WAS NOT GIVEN MUCH PRECISION. THE NUCLEUS OF THIS FORCE, IF IT WERE TO COME INTO BEING, WOULD BE THE PRESENT DEFENSE AGREEMENT OF THE WEST AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY WHICH WOULD BE BEEFED UP AND ENLARGED TO INCLUDE SOME CENTRAL AFRICAN COUNTRIES. THE GENERAL FEELING AT THE QUAI WAS THAT THE PROJECT WOULD PROBABLY COME TO LITTLE. THERE WAS SOME QUESTION AS TO WHETHER IT WAS EVEN A GOOD IDEA AS THE COHERENCE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PRESENT GROUPING IS QUESTIONABLE AND WOULD ONLY BE FURTHER DILUTED BY THE ADDITION OF COUNTRIES WITH DIFFERENT CONCERNS.

4. AS MOST OF THE BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH PRESIDENT GISCARD TOOK PLACE WITH VERY LIMITED ATTENDANCE IT WILL BE SOME TIME, IF EVER, BEFORE QUAI OFFICIALS HAVE A PRECISE IDEA OF WHAT WAS SAID AND ANY COMMITMENTS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN MADE. WE WILL BE REPORTING FURTHER AS SUCH INFORMATION BECOMES AVAILABLE, BUT THINK THAT THE POSTS WHOSE LEADERS PARTICIPATED MIGHT BE IN A BETTER POSITION THAN WE TO GET THIS KIND OF INFORMATION QUICKLY.

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